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ABSTRACT

Student teachers' conceptions of their own successful and unsuccessful lessons were recorded in journals kept during field experience. The student teachers were asked to describe both the most and the least successful lessons taught during the first 2 weeks and again during the final weeks of student teaching. Journals were separated into elementary, secondary, and special education teaching areas. Differences among the three areas were considered along with changes that occurred during the student teaching experience. Seven student teachers were enrolled in the secondary education program, 6 in the special education program grades K-12, and 11 in the elementary education program. The data suggest that lessons were considered successful when the student teachers' agenda proceeded uninterrupted, and when the pupils showed some interest in the task, materials, or lesson content. Lessons were considered unsuccessful when they did not go according to plan or when the pupils interrupted the student teachers' agendas. All the student teachers showed less concern for classroom management problems at the end of the school year than at the beginning. (LL)

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Student Teachers' Perspectives on Successful and Unsuccessful Lessons

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Abstract

This investigation characterizes student teachers' perspectives on lesson success. Evidence indicates that they may be predisposed to define successful lessons as those in which "things went as planned" and no management problems occurred, regardless of whether objectives were achieved.

The quality of undergraduate teacher education programs received considerable attention during the decade of the 80s (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Goodlad, 1984). Recommendations for improvement have been abundant. Suggestions range from total removal of undergraduate teacher education from state universities to the upgrading of existing programs to include and reflect decisions based on teacher effectiveness research (Hedges, 1989; Berliner, 1984; Gage, 1984). Hedges (1989) recommends that existing state university programs be abolished and state-supported schools be established with the sole mission of preparing teachers. On the other hand, Berliner (1984) and Gage (1984) agree that existing teacher preparation programs can be salvaged based upon a foundation of scientific research.

The emerging scientific basis for teaching indicates that changes in teaching practices are possible and that there is indeed a connection between what teachers do in the classroom and what children learn (Brophy & Good, 1986). Simply stated, the decade of the 80s was a time when researchers began to answer previously unanswered questions regarding teacher effects on student achievement. Efforts have centered around the notion that educating novice teachers to perform in a manner similar to that of experienced effective teachers will cause desirable changes in not only student achievement, but also student attitude and conduct (Gage, 1984).

Preservice teacher education programs offer a forum for the dissemination of effective teaching research findings. In their preservice courses, prospective teachers learn the complex skills associated with more effective teaching, such as: providing academic feedback, monitoring seatwork activities, designing tasks that

motivate students to learn, among numerous others. Preservice experience for the novice, working with an experienced professional, offers a safe environment in which the beginner cannot harm children while learning their teaching skills. Researchers are just beginning to gain understanding of the complexities of the classroom. Consequently, better courses are currently being designed to prepare novice teachers (Berliner, 1984).

The teacher of the 90s is seen as a decision maker who must handle a complex and dynamic social environment. Knowledge of the cognitive processes required of teachers indicates that expert teachers manage to remain in control of situations; whereas, novice teachers are less able to maintain control (Leinhardt & Greeno, 1986). Research that endeavors to consider teachers' thoughts, judgments, and decisions and to link those cognitive processes to their classroom behavior provide a sound basis for preservice teacher education programs. Educational research must then focus on teachers' thoughts relative to their behaviors in order to learn how decisions, relative to the classroom, are made (Shavelson & Stern, 1981; Galluzzo & Minix, 1988).

Tabachnick and Zeicher (1984) see the role that student teaching plays in the preparation of teachers as an important one. While student teaching is not singled out as the only influential element of preservice teacher education, it is viewed as having an effect that verifies and confirms conceptions that are brought to the experience. The problematic actions and interactions of student teachers during the experience need to be considered carefully to develop further understanding of the impact of student teaching (Abernathy, Manera, & Wright, 1985).

Even after a decade of promising research exploring the area of teachers' thoughts, little is known about student teachers' conceptions of the teaching act (Borko, Lalik, Tomchin, 1987). Available studies, however, do provide evidence of a relationship between student teachers' thoughts and actions in the classroom setting (Adler, 1984; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984; Galluzzo & Minix, 1988). It is reasonable to suggest that student teachers' conceptions of successful and unsuccessful teaching could influence their classroom decision making practices.

This study examines student teachers' conceptions of their own successful and unsuccessful lessons as recorded in journals kept during their student teaching experience. Student teachers were asked to describe their most successful and most unsuccessful lessons taught during the first two weeks and again during the final weeks of student teaching. Journals were separated into elementary, secondary, and special education teaching areas. Differences among the three areas were considered along with changes that occurred during the student teaching experience. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to examine how student teachers defined successful and unsuccessful lessons, in an attempt to develop a model of the problems faced by the beginning teachers.

Method

Research Sample

This study was conducted in conjunction with a required student teaching experience during the fall 1988 and spring 1989 semesters. All participants were enrolled in the teacher preparation program at a southeastern university of the U.S.A. Lessons used for consideration

were conducted in elementary and secondary schools located in the same geographical region as the university and within the university's service area. Schools represented a predominately rural community.

Seven of the participants were enrolled in the secondary education program (grades 7-12). Two of the secondary participants were male. The secondary participants represented a variety of disciplines including biology, mathematics, general science, and English literature and grammar. Six of the participants were enrolled in the special education program (grades K-12). The special education participants were engaged in student teaching assignments with trainable mentally handicapped (TMH) children and learning-behavior disorder (LBD) children. One of the special education participants was a male. Eleven additional participants were enrolled in the elementary education program (grades K-6). All of the elementary participants were student teaching in self-contained classrooms; all elementary participants were female.

Data Collection

All 24 participants were required to keep and submit journals every two-weeks during their student teaching experience. Due to the inherent requirements of the various teacher certification programs, student teaching experiences ranged from a minimum of six-weeks to a maximum of twelve-weeks. Although students submitted journals on a biweekly basis, only the first and last journals of each participant were used for purposes of the study. Students were asked to report their conceptions regarding the following four items: (I) Describe your most successful lesson., (II) Describe your most unsuccessful lesson., (III) Describe your greatest concern about teaching., and (IV) Describe your greatest concern about your professional growth.

Only the first two items were evaluated for the purposes of this report. The researchers felt that the variety of student teaching assignments would allow for a range of responses and insights of student teachers' conceptions regarding their successful and unsuccessful lessons. Journals were submitted to the researchers who, in all cases, were serving as the student teachers' university supervisors.

Data Analysis

Procedures were carefully selected to ensure coding reliability. Journal analysis consisted of the following six steps: first, the three researchers read and summarized all of the journals independently; second, together the researchers generated the response categories based upon their independent readings of the journals; third, the researchers met and discussed each journal entry and reached consensus regarding the assignment of the journal entry to the appropriate response category; fourth, the researchers calculated percentages for each response category, fifth, the researchers analyzed the response categories, the frequency of responses, the percentages within each category, and the differences among the secondary, elementary, and special education student teachers' responses; sixth, the researchers then shared their perceptions and came to consensus in drawing conclusions. These steps are summarized separately in the following narrative.

First, separate copies of all of the elementary, secondary, and special education journals were made for the researchers. The three researchers read all of the journals independently and summarized all successful and unsuccessful lessons.

Second, in a meeting including all three researchers, actual journal entries and summaries were content analyzed to determine categories for successful and unsuccessful lessons. To ensure consistency in coding, complete agreement (by all three researchers) was reached on each response category included in the study. Any suggested category that complete agreement could not be agreed upon was eliminated. The following 14 response categories were used for analysis of student teachers' conceptions of successful lessons:

Successful lessons occurred when . . .

- lessons were well planned.
- the student teacher perceived the task as engaging.
- pupils were involved/responsive.
- the student teacher was enthusiastic about the lesson content.
- pupils demonstrated enthusiasm for the lesson content.
- lesson content provided hands-on experiences.
- lesson content provided practical/real-life experiences.
- the student teacher perceived the lesson material to be lesson enhancing.
- the student teacher felt as though pupils understood the lesson content.
- classroom management was effective.
- set induction was used.
- no successful lessons were reported.
- the student teacher had a general sense of personal confidence.
- remarks were uncategorizable.

The following 17 categories were found to reflect student teachers' conceptions of unsuccessful lessons:

Unsuccessul lessons occurred when . . .

- there was not enough time.
- classroom management was not effective and pupils were off task.
- classroom management was not effective and pupils demonstrated overt misbehavior.
- the student teacher did not know lesson content well.
- the student teacher did not like lesson content.
- the student teacher felt that the lesson was not well planned/executed.
- pupils were not enthusiastic and/or bored.
- the time and/or day of the lesson made teaching difficult.
- the lesson exceeded pupils' attention span.
- the student teacher felt a lack of self-confidence.
- mater als were inappropriate for pupils' age and/or ability ranges.
- the student teacher perceived the task was not engaging.
- efforts to manage small groups for instruction were unsuccessful.
- pupils did not understand lesson content.
- no unsuccessful lessons were reported.
- no response.
- uncategorizable response.

Third, together the three researchers discussed each journal entry and reached consensus regarding the assignment of participants

responses to categories.

Fourth, researchers calculated response percentages for all categories in each of the following three separate teaching areas: elementary, secondary, and special education. Percentages were calculated by taking the total number of first responses, final responses, and total responses for each successful and unsuccessful lesson category, i.e., "Successful lessons occurred when the pupils were involved/responsive." First = 15.38%, Final = 8.33%, Total = 12.00%. The response percentages for successful lessons are presented in Table 1 and the percentages for unsuccessful lessons are presented in Table 2.

Fifth, the researchers independently analyzed the response percentages and recorded holistic impressions of the elementary, secondary, and special education participants responses and the respective percentages achieved. These impressions were used to communicate the frequency of student teachers' journal entries as they related to the response categories.

Sixth, in a meeting including all of the researchers independent perceptions were shared. Data were summarized and discussed regarding all participants, response categories, percentages, and researchers perceptions. Researchers searched for patterns, similarities, and differences in first and final responses for successful and unsuccessful lessons. At this stage in the study, elementary responses, secondary responses, and special education responses were considered as three separate groups and comparisons were made among the groups. Finally, judgments were made regarding all participants responses considered together.

Limitations

The researchers note the limitations of the present study. The principal researchers served as the college supervisors for all participants in this study. Variety in the length of experiences, the size of the samples and rural geographic location of these student teachers are also set forth as study limitations. The findings are limited to student teachers' judgments regarding lesson success. Generalizations should be made with these limitations in mind.

Results

Content analysis of student teachers' journal entries regarding their conceptions of successful and unsuccessful lessons was organized in the following manner (Tables 1 and 2): (a) Characteristic concerns of successful and unsuccessful lessons were identified for all three groups. (b) Journals were grouped into elementary, secondary, and special education teaching areas and successful and unsuccessful lessons were considered separately and then compared. (c) In addition, comparisons were made regarding changes in the nature of the first and final journal entries among all three teaching area groups.

Concerns: Successful and Unsuccessful Lessons

Characteristic concerns dealing with successful and unsuccessful lesson have been analyzed and reported with respect to the following areas: Successful First Lessons, Successful Final Lessons, Successful Lesson Totals, Unsuccessful First Lessons, Unsuccessful Final Lessons, and Unsuccessful Lesson Totals.

Successful First Lessons. Of the 14 concerns that characterized their first successful lessons, elementary teachers' responses

TABLE 1

STUDENT TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF SUCCESSFUL LESSONS

(reported in percents)

RESPONSE CATEGORIES	ELEMENTARY			SECONDARY			SPECIAL ED.		
	FIRST N=26	FINAL N=24	TOTAL N=50	FIRST N=15	FINAL N=15	TOTAL N=30	FIRST N=12	FINAL N=20	TOTAL N=32
Successful lessons occurred when. . .									
1. lessons were well planned.	3.85	12.50	8.00	6.67	0.00	3.33	8.33	5.00	6.25
2. the student teacher perceived the task as engaging.	11.54	29.17	20.00	0.00	6.67	3.33	0.00	5.00	3.12
3. pupils were involved/responsive.	15.38	8.33	12.00	26.67	26.67	26.67	0.00	10.00	6.25
4. the student teacher was enthusiastic about the lesson content.	3.85	0.00	2.00	0.00	6.67	3.33	0.00	5.00	3.12
5. pupils demonstrated enthusiam for the lesson content.	0.00	8.33	4.00	13.33	6.67	10.00	16.66	5.00	9.37
6. lesson content provided hands-on experiences.	15.38	4.17	10.00	6.67	13.33	10.00	25.00	15.00	18.80
7. lesson content provided practical/real-life experiences.	11.54	4.17	8.00	0.00	6.67	3.33	25.00	15.00	18.80
8. the student teacher perceived the lesson material to be lesson enhancing.	3.85	20.83	12.00	13.33	13.33	13.33	0.00	10.00	6.25
9. the student teacher felt as though pupils understood the lesson content.	19.23	4.17	12.00	0.00	6.67	3.33	16.66	25.00	21.90
10. classroom management was effective.	3.85	0.00	2.00	13.33	0.00	6.67	0.00	0.00	0.00
11. set induction was used.	11.54	4.17	8.00	6.67	6.67	6.67	0.00	5.00	3.12
12. no successful lessons were reported.	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.67	0.00	3.33	0.00	0.00	0.00
13. the student teacher had a general sense of personal confidence.	0.00	4.17	2.00	6.67	0.00	3.33	0.00	0.00	0.00
14. remarks were uncategorizable.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.67	3.33	8.33	0.00	3.12
	100.01	100.01	100.00	100.01	100.02	99.98	99.98	100.00	100.10

TABLE 2

STUDENT TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF UNSUCCESSFUL LESSONS

(reported in percents)

RESPONSE CATAGORIES	ELEMENTARY			SECONDARY			SPECIAL ED.		
	FIRST N=17	FINAL N=20	TOTAL N=37	FIRST N=13	FINAL N=15	TOTAL N=28	FIRST N=10	FINAL N=8	TOTAL N=18
Unsuccessul lessons occurred when. . .									
1. there was not enough time.	11.76	5.00	8.11	0.00	6.67	3.57	0.00	12.50	5.56
2. classroom management was not effective and pupils were off task.	0.00	5.00	2.70	0.00	6.67	3.57	10.00	12.50	11.11
3. classroom management was not effective and pupils demonstrated overt misbehavior.	17.65	10.00	13.51	15.38	6.67	10.71	10.00	0.00	5.56
4. the student teacher did not know lesson content well.	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	6.67	7.14	0.00	0.00	0.00
5. the student teacher did not like lesson content.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6. the student teacher felt the lesson was not well planned/excuted.	29.41	20.00	24.32	15.38	13.34	14.28	10.00	12.50	11.11
7. pupils were not enthusiastic and/or bored.	5.88	10.00	8.11	7.69	20.00	14.28	20.00	0.00	11.11
8. the time and/or day of the lesson made teaching difficult.	5.88	10.00	8.11	0.00	13.34	7.14	0.00	12.50	5.56
9. the lesson exceeded pupils' attention span.	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	6.67	7.14	10.00	12.50	11.11
10. the student teacher felt a lack of self-confidence.	11.76	0.00	5.41	30.76	13.34	21.42	0.00	0.00	0.00
11. materials were inappropriate for pupils' age and/or ability ranges.	0.00	10.00	5.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.50	5.56
12. the student perceived the task was not engaging.	0.00	5.00	2.70	7.69	0.00	3.57	0.00	0.00	0.00
13. efforts to manage small groups for instruction were unsuccessful.	5.88	15.00	10.81	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
14. pupils did not understand lesson content.	5.88	5.00	5.41	7.69	0.00	3.57	10.00	12.50	11.11
15. no unsuccessful lessons were reported.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20.00	0.00	11.11
16. no response.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	5.56
17. uncategorizable response.	5.88	5.00	5.41	0.00	6.67	3.57	0.00	12.50	5.56
	99.98	100.00	100.01	99.97	100.04	99.96	100.00	100.00	100.02

indicated "pupils understood the lesson content" approximately 20% of the time. Secondary teachers respones indicated "pupils were involved/responsive" 26.67% of the time. Special education student teachers indicated "lesson content provided hands-on experiences" and "lesson content provided practical/real-life experiences" in a total of 50% of their responses. These characteristics represented the most frequently reported perceptions of each of the three groups on first journal entries. Other high percentage areas on initial journal entries for successful lessons were as follows: Elementary teachers indicated "lesson content provided hands-on experiences (15.38%)," "pupils were involved/responsive (15.38%)," "the student teacher perceived the task as engaging (11.54%)," "lesson content provided practical/real-life experiences (11.54%)," and "set induction was used (11.54%)." Secondary teachers' responses indicated "the pupils demonstrated enthusiasm for the lesson's content (13.33%)," "the student teacher perceived the lesson materials to be lesson enhancing (13.33%)," and "classroom management was effective (13.33%)" to be causes of their initial successful lessons. Special education teachers' responses indicated "pupils demonstrated enthusiasm for the lesson content (16.66%)" and "the student teacher felt as though pupils understood the lesson content (16.66%)" as reasons for their success. All other response categories appeared in the student teachers' journals fewer than 10% of the time (see Table 1).

Successful Final Lessons. Elementary student teachers' responses indicated "the student teacher perceived the task as engaging" approximately 30% of the time as the reason for the success of their final lessons. Secondary student teachers were consistent with their first lesson response and suggested "the pupils were

involved/responsive (26.67%)" as the major reason for their success. Special education student teachers indicated "the student teacher felt as though pupils understood the lesson content (25%)" as the reason for their successful lessons. Additional areas recognized by the student teachers as contributing to the success of their final lessons were as follows: elementary teachers indicated "lessons were well planned (12.5%)" and "the student teacher perceived the lesson materials to be lesson enhancing (20.83%)" as reasons for their successful lessons; secondary teachers favored "the lesson's content provided hands-on experiences (13.33%)" and "the student teacher perceived the lesson materials to be lesson enhancing (13.33%);" special education teachers indicated "lesson content provided hands-on experiences" and "lesson content provided practical/real-life experiences" for a combined total of 30% of their reasons for success. This represents little change in their perceptions of reasons for the success of their lessons. Special education teachers' responses indicated that "pupils were involved/responsive (10%)" and "the student teacher perceived the lesson materials to be lesson enhancing (10%)." All other response categories were mentioned in fewer than 10% of the journal responses (see Table 1).

Successful Lesson Totals. When combining first and final lesson findings, a total of 112 categories were identifed in all of the student teachers journals as reasons for successful lessons. The categories that typified the 50 elementary students teachers' responses were as follows: "the student teacher perceived the task as engaging (20%)," "pupils were involved/responsive (12%)," "the student teacher perceived the lesson materials to be lesson enhancing (12%)," "the student teacher felt as though pupils understood the lesson

content (12%)," "and lesson content provided hands-on experiences (10%)." Secondary teachers 30 responses fell into the following categories: "the pupils were involved/responsive (26.67%)," "the student teacher perceived the lesson materials to be lesson enhancing (13.33%)," "the pupils demonstrated enthusiasm for the lesson's content (10%)," "and "the lesson's content provided hands-on experiences (10%)." Special education teachers had a combined total of 32 reasons for their successful lesson categories. Among those items with percentages greater than 10% were "the student teacher felt as though pupils understood the lesson content (21.90%)," "lesson content provided hands-on experiences (18.8%)," and lesson content provided practical/real-life experiences (18.8%)." All other response categories were mentioned less than 10% of the total time (see Table 1).

Unsuccessful First Lessons. Unsuccessful lesson journal entries were divided into 17 different response categories (Table 2). On their first journal entry regarding unsuccessful lessons student teachers' responses fell into the following categories: elementary student teachers', "the student teacher felt that the lesson was not well planned/executed," 29.41% of the time; secondary student teachers', "the student teacher expressed a general lack of self-confidence," 30.76% of the time; special education student teachers', "pupils were not enthusiastic and/or bored," 20% of the time. In addition, the special education student teachers' indicated that they had experienced "no unsuccessful lesson" in 20% of their responses. These concerns represented the number one concerns for each group on the first journal entries. Additional categories identified by elementary teachers were "classroom management was not

effective and pupils demonstrated overt misbehavior (17.65%)," "there was not enough time (11.76%)," "and the student teacher felt a lack of self-confidence (11.76%)." Secondary teachers' responses indicated that "classroom management was not effective and pupils demonstrated overt misbehavior (15.38%)" and "the student teacher felt that the lesson was not well planned/executed (15.38%)." For special education student teachers "pupils were off task," "classroom management was not effective and pupils demonstrated overt misbehavior," "the student teacher felt that the lesson was not well planned/executed," "the lesson exceeded pupils' attention spans," "pupils did not understand lesson content," and "no response" each received 10%. All other categories received fewer than 10% of the responses (see Table 2).

Unsuccessful Final Lessons. Elementary teachers indicated that "the student teacher felt that the lesson was not well planned/executed" was the number one concern in the journal entries made during the final weeks of student teaching. Twenty percent of the elementary teachers' responses fell into that category. "Efforts to manage small groups for instruction were unsuccessful" received 15% of the concerns; four other categories were represented with 10% of the elementary teachers responses (see Table 2). Secondary teachers indicated "the pupils were not enthusiastic and/or were bored/disinterested in the lesson (20%)" as their number one concern category. Three areas were identified with 13.34% as reasons that contributed to the lack of success during lessons occuring in the final weeks of student teaching (see Table 2). Special education teachers did not have one specific number one concern on their final entry, but indicated eight separate concerns at the 12.5% level (see Table 2).

Unsuccessful Lesson Totals. A total of 83 reasons were categorized for all unsuccessful lessons of the participating student teachers. The responses that typified the 37 elementary responses were "the student teacher felt that the lesson was not well planned/executed (24.32%)," "classroom management was not effective and pupils demonstrated overt misbehavior (13.51%)," and "efforts to manage small groups for instruction were unsuccessful (10.81%)." The majority of the secondary student teachers 28 responses were divided in the following manner: "the student teacher expressed a general lack of self-confidence (21.42%)," "the student teacher felt that the lesson was not well planned/executed (14.28%)," "the pupils were not enthusiastic and/or were bored/disinterested in the lesson (14.28%)," and "classroom management was not effective and pupils demonstrated overt misbehavior (10.71%)." Special education teachers' 18 responses were divided equally among six categories at the 11.11% level (see Table 2).

Comparisons Among Teaching Areas

When comparing the journal entries made by elementary, secondary, and special education student teachers, the following differences were noted among their reasons for successful lessons. Elementary student teachers suggested "the student teacher perceived the task as engaging" in 20% of their responses. 42% of their total remaining responses dealt directly with the nature of the lesson content. Secondary teachers expressed that their successful lessons occurred when "pupils were involved/responsive (26.67%)" Special education student teachers had successful lessons when "pupils understood the lesson content (21.90%) and lessons provided practical/real-life and hands-on experiences (37.60%). Reasons for unsuccessful lessons also

differed among the three groups in several categories. Elementary student teachers identified the poor quality of their lesson planning and execution as the cause in approximately 25% of their responses. Secondary student teachers felt that a general lack of self-confidence (21.42%) was the cause of their unsuccessful lessons. Special education teachers split their concerns among planning/execution, pupil boredom, pupils' off task behavior, and lesson content. Across the three groups, planning (24.32%, 14.28%, 11.11%) and classroom management/discipline (16.21%, 14.28%, 16.67%) concerns appeared to be the most consistently mentioned issues. Another common concern among the three groups was that of student boredom (8.11%, 14.28%, 11.11%). Lack of self-confidence seemed to be a particularly high concern for secondary student teachers (21.42%).

Comparisons of Initial and Final Responses

Comparisons of responses made during the first two weeks of student teaching and the final weeks of student teaching indicated several changes. Pupil enthusiasm for lesson content decreased as a cause for lesson success among special education (16.66% to 5%) and secondary (13.33% to 6.67%) student teachers. Hands-on, practical, and real-life experiences decreased as reasons for lesson success among elementary (26.92% to 8.34%) and special education (50% to 30%), but increased for secondary (6.67% to 20%). The quality of lesson materials increased as a reason for lesson success among elementary (3.85% to 20.83%) and special education (0% to 10%), but remained the same for secondary (13.33%-13.33%) student teachers. Elementary and secondary student teachers appeared to gain confidence in their ability when comparing first and final unsuccessful lessons. When responding to the category dealing with unsuccessful lesson that

directly dealt with the student teachers' "lack of self-confidence," elementary went from 11.76% to 0% and secondary went from 30.76% to 13.34%. In the category dealing with "classroom management was not effective and pupils demonstrated overt misbehavior," student teachers' responses in all three teaching areas indicated a decrease from the first to the final report (elementary 17.65% to 10%, secondary 15.38% to 6.67%, special education 10% to 0%). All three groups of student teachers showed an increase when attributing lack of lesson success to the time and/or day of the lesson (elementary 5.88% to 10%, secondary 0% to 13,34%, special education 0% to 12.5%). Concerns regarding the appropriateness of student materials increased for elementary (0% to 10%) and special education (0% to 12.5%) student teachers.

Discussion

The data on the three groups of student teachers suggest three different norms of classroom life. Elementary student teachers indicated in their journals that successful lessons were those in which the student teachers perceived the task to be engaging for the pupils, i.e., "this activity was fun," or the lesson materials were particularly effective, i.e., "I found a really good worksheet that had a treasure map." Secondary level student teachers perceived the lessons were successful when the pupils were involved/responsive during the lesson, i.e., "they answered most of my questions." Special education student teachers indicated that lessons were successful when instruction involved "hands-on" and "real-life" experiences, and when the student teacher perceived that the students understood the lesson content. These are three distinctly different

orientations to teaching. These data indicate that student teachers in these three areas hold different expectations for teaching and classroom processes.

Concerning unsuccessful lessons, the student teachers hold a little more in common. The most mentioned features of unsuccessful lessons across the three groups dealt with student teachers' planning/execution of lessons, i.e., "I assumed they wouldn't have any problems with the calendar. I was wrong. I really had to adapt my lesson plan to meet their needs." and classroom management/discipline, i.e., "most students were off-task," or "Johnny continually misbehaved and attracted the attention of other students." The second most common feature was boredom, which also seemed related to the teaching strategy selected by the teacher, "I lost their attention. I think I presented too long." In some instances, the pupils did not show enough interest in the material for the student teachers, and the student teachers reported a lack of confidence or liking for a particular aspect of the material, i.e., "I really don't like zoology, so I wasn't comfortable teaching it to my class."

Changes in conceptions during the student teaching experience, indicated that student teachers gained confidence in their ability to manage the classroom during the lesson. In all cases elementary, secondary, and special education student teachers' responses indicated a decrease in concern regarding effective classroom management and ineffective classroom management that resulted in overt misbehavior on the part of the students. Journal entries made during the first two weeks of student teaching suggested that student teachers were struggling with ways to simultaneously teach and manage the classroom, i.e., "I had a hard time controlling the noise level," and "It is

review, so many of the students picked up on it very quickly, became bored, and became disruptive." Elementary and secondary student teachers expressed fewer concerns regarding their general personal lack of self-confidence on their final journal entries. Initial journal entries suggested an insecurity related to their content knowledge, i.e., "I really don't know a lot about worms and the kids asked tons of questions which made me feel uncomfortable." In addition, student teachers expressed a general insecurity, i.e., "My first grammar lesson was terrible! I was unsure of myself and I assumed too much on my honor kids' behalf," and "I felt rushed and that the students weren't catching on to the 'schwa' sound as I expected. I was so nervous that my hands were sweating and my legs were weak." All three groups of student teachers showed an increase when attributing lack of lesson success to the time and/or day of the lesson as they became more experienced. Elementary and special education student teachers indicated a greater concern for the appropriateness of materials toward the end of their student teaching.

These data indicate that lessons were successful when the student teachers' agendas proceeded uninterrupted, and when the pupils showed some interest in the tasks, materials, or lesson content. Unsuccessful lessons were those in which student teachers were not well planned and the pupils interrupted the student teachers' agendas. These are significant findings in that they indicate the problem areas encountered by student teachers as they learn to teach. Evidence of the level of confidence gained during student teaching and changes in the nature of concerns is indicative of the maturity that takes place and the important role student teaching plays in the development of beginning teachers.

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